When People Steal From Me

A Stealing Lesson

**Purpose:** Students learn that stealing robs people of much more than property. Seeing a theft through the eyes of the victim helps youngsters understand that stealing is wrong for more reasons than getting caught and being punished.

**Materials:**

Writing paper for each student

One index card, cut into six pieces and numbered from 1 to 6

Book: A Bike Like Sergio’s by Maribeth Boelts

Book: Pickers is a thief: A story about shoplifting by Gary Antilla

**Time:**

Approximately 30 minutes

**Focus:**

*Say:* Most of us know someone who's had something stolen or has stolen something. Each of us may fit into one or both of these categories ourselves. Today we're going to talk about how it feels to have something stolen and what it means to steal from other people.

None of us likes to have things stolen, especially if the stolen items have special meaning.

*Say:* Everyone has special things — some are gifts from friends or relatives. These may or may not be worth much in money, but we care about them very much. Others are things for which we worked hard and saved our money. We may be very proud of them because they represent something we earned.

**Lesson:**

Pass out paper to make a list of their favorite things.

*Say:* Today I want you to make a list of six of your favorite things — things that are really special to you, things you would miss a lot if someone were to take them. **Do not number them yet.** Next to each one, tell why it's important.

Don’t let anyone see your list.

When they're done, tell them to number the items in order of their importance (number "1" by the thing you would hate to lose the most, "2" by the next most important thing, on so on.

Tell them you're going to call on them individually.

*Say:* We're going to pretend a thief is going from person to person, stealing things. First, I will shuffle these six pieces of paper that are numbered from one to six. Pick any card. Whichever number you pick will be the number of things that are stolen from you. For example, if you pick the number two, you will lose two items**. (To save time, you may have each person have just one thing stolen, and the number they draw matches the number of the item on their list that was stolen).**

*Say:* Then I will shuffle the cards again and let you pick the top or bottom card to see what items are stolen. If you pick card number six, you will lose the item you put a six by on your list. Then I will put that card on the desk, shuffle the remaining cards, and let you draw a second time to pick the second item taken.

After each student picks the cards, ask what was taken and why it was special to him or her. Ask each student to tell how he or she would feel if those items had really been stolen. What would he or she feel like saying to the thief?

After all the students have chosen their cards and expressed their feelings, ask them the following questions:

1. How does the person who has something special stolen feel about the loss?
2. What are some things you might want to say to the thief?
3. Wouldn’t you feel bad about making someone else this angry and upset by stealing from them? (Emphasize that what may seem like an insignificant item to the thief may have a special meaning to the victim.)

**Closure:**

*Say:* If you ever think about taking something from someone without asking, think of what we talked about today. Taking things from people hurts them. Think hard about how you would feel, and you’ll know it’s the wrong thing to do in any situation.

**Extension:**

Counselor may read A Bike Like Sergio’s by Maribeth Boelts or Pickers is a Thief by Gary Antilla or leave for the classroom teacher to read as an extension/follow up activity.

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